

# Dow CONSTANTINE

King County Councilmember



District 8

Winter 2003

## Dear Friend and Neighbor,

Thank you again for placing your confidence in me as your King County Councilmember. It is a tremendous privilege to serve the people of West Seattle, Burien, White Center, South Park, Boulevard Park and Vashon.

2002 was a challenging year for our region and for this government. King County was confronted with a \$53 million operating fund shortfall. We met the challenge: On November 25 **we passed a balanced budget for 2003.**



This fall I was tapped to be part of the Budget Leadership Team. We crafted a budget that stitched together – if only for one more year – the remnants of the health and human services “safety net”. Meanwhile, accounts legally set aside for conservation and transportation were carefully invested. The results of some of those efforts are detailed inside.

In 2003, for the third year in a row, King County will again grapple with a massive funding shortage, due in large part to the effects of mammoth tax cuts, the economic recession, and increasing unfunded mandates.

As Chair of the Labor, Operations and Technology Committee, my top priority is to expand meaningful performance and efficiency measures throughout County government – to wring every bit of value possible from each public dollar.

I look forward to continuing our work together this year. As always, I encourage you to contact me with your concerns and ideas.

Sincerely,

*Dow*

**Dow Constantine**

District 8

Metropolitan King County Council

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Dow Constantine**  
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## 2003 BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS AROUND DISTRICT 8

While the County's general operating fund suffered a \$53 million shortfall in 2003, **the dedicated funds for transportation and conservation remained healthy**. I am pleased to tell you that, with your help, funding was included in the 2003 budget for the following local projects:

**Judd Creek** – The County will assist Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust with the purchase of this environmentally critical area in the Judd Creek watershed on Vashon Island. The project encompasses 30 acres, including a major wetland, helping to protect Vashon's drinking water supply.

**Schurman Climbing Rock** – In a partnership with REI, Mountain Madness, the Seattle Parks Foundation and others, King County will participate in the effort to restore Schurman Rock at Camp Long. Considered the nation's first man-made climbing rock, this 60-year old West Seattle landmark, presently closed due to deterioration, is a treasure of the WPA era.

**Maury Island Conservation Initiative** – Protection of critical nearshore salmon habitat and shorelands within King County has been identified as a high priority by the Council. Funds were appropriated to help acquire and preserve a mile of irreplaceable shoreline on Maury Island. The Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust, Cascade Land Conservancy and King County are partners in the Maury Island Conservation Initiative.

**Hope VI** – Funds for open space to be created in conjunction with the Park Lake Homes reconstruction remained in the King County budget. This "Hope VI" project will be a key to revitalizing White Center, and King County is pleased to be a partner.

**Elliott Bay Water Taxi** – **Good news!** As we seek innovative ways to move through our congested region, the very popular Elliott Bay Water Taxi will return. Many details have yet to be worked out but, if all goes well, regular

crossings will begin April 1 and continue through September 30. Importantly, capital funds – to match a federal grant - were also included for construction of a permanent dock a few blocks from the water taxi's temporary home at Seacrest Park. Siting, permitting and construction of the permanent dock could take two or more years.

### Other budget news...

- The Executive's proposed 2003 budget cut several code enforcement positions. The Council restored six of these positions, ensuring that code violations can be addressed.
- The 2003 budget continues funding for the Southwest Boys and Girls Club, as well as the New Start program for at-risk youth, recognizing the importance of these efforts to the White Center community.

## Keep more of what you earn!

### *White Center Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign*

- The **Earned Income Tax Credit** provides federal tax breaks, or even refunds, for lower income working people.
- **Free Tax Preparation** – From January 25 – April 12, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites are open throughout White Center. Your taxes will be prepared by trained volunteers and filed electronically for a rapid refund.
- **Are you eligible?** Estimates are that **between three and nine million dollars** intended for eligible White Center residents goes **unclaimed each year**. That's why this campaign is reaching out especially to White Center, but you don't have to live in a particular neighborhood to qualify.
- **Call 1-800-755-5317** for free tax preparation locations and information about tax credit eligibility. **Don't be left out!**

